

844 both arms. A second woman sits in front, holding the legs wide open, and catches the child as it comes out. If the head does not come first some woman known for her skill will insert two fingers or the whole hand in the vulva and assist the delivery of the child with the fingers. Both of these women are usually of the opposite moiety from the parturient woman. Her mother, although present, is never one of them. The natives give as a reason that the mother is ashamed to look at her daughter's sexual organs. Sometimes, while the birth is taking place, one woman will massage the stomach of the parturient woman and recite a spell as she does so. All these women who have been of assistance at the birth will later be paid for their services. At the birth of the infant Murri in the village of Ambwa, the mother, Luga, was supported by a woman of her moiety, and wife of the infant's father's classificatory brother. In front, assisting the deliverance of the child was a woman of the opposite moiety and classificatory sister of the infant's father.

After the child is born, the mother bathes in the sea, rubbing her abdomen with a downward motion to get rid of the after-birth. She comes back, feeds the child, and then lies down in the house on the bamboo bed with her infant. Should the mother's breasts not be sufficiently developed, another woman will suckle the infant. She is selected merely for the fullness of her breasts, and with no regard to her relationship to the child or its mother. The mother remains in the house with the child for about a week.

The umbilical cord, *bitung*, is saved by the mother and put in a basket along with some *tera* (currency). It is kept in this manner until adult life, when it is sometimes thrown away.

A few hours after the birth the baby is held over a fire made of dry grass and coconut shells, and water is poured over him. Both the smoke of the fire and the water are supposed to make the infant strong. The infant's mother's

159 was born. They both died in her early childhood, and she continued living on the plantation, very much the protégée of her "master" and "mistress," owners of the plantation. She slept in their house, and her "mistress" locked the door to Taiti's room every night, so that no men could have access to her. Taiti was carefully guarded according to white standards, and for a time, therefore, had nothing to do with men. Then one man working on the plantation made love magic to get her. He recited a spell over an aromatic leaf, [832] which he then wore, and the wind blew the fragrance of the plant to Taiti, and then she was in love with him. Taiti told her "mistress" that she wanted this man, and so the two were married and continued working on the plantation.

159 This marriage only lasted a short time. There was a divorce and she remarried. She became pregnant now, and 845 near the end of her pregnancy another man wanted to have intercourse with her. She refused because she was pregnant, and he was angry at the refusal. The would-be [154] lover made magic of revenge over a betel-nut which he placed by her door. Unsuspectingly she walked over the nut, and as a result, she says, the child died in her womb. (The child was born dead two days later.)

159 Taiti later became friendly with a half-caste Chinese-Melanesian in Rabaul, who seduced her with love magic. 837 This consisted of putting a leaf over which he had said a spell in a glass of beer which he gave her to drink. It was [832] her first taste of beer, and that night she dreamt she was having intercourse with him, and the next day she desired him. Before he had made advances to her, but she had always rejected him. Now she went to him.

From now on she had many husbands and even more lovers, but she had a special fondness for the Chinese half-caste.

159 She is now middle-aged, and says that she is through with men. But this is obviously just "talk." She is very vain,